

An excessive increase in the minimum wage will hurt the working poor, Mr. Speaker, and especially those who are trying to begin the American Dream by entering the workforce at entry level jobs. Minimum wage increases, the unbroken record of our economic history attests, raise unemployment among the young, minorities and part-time workers, the very people that a minimum wage is thought to help. And sadly, for reasons I don't entirely understand, for every increase in the Federal minimum wage, African Americans have been hit the hardest with the advent of jobs that are lost with an increase in the minimum wage.

It would be the late economist Milton Friedman, a Nobel laureate, who said, "The high rate of unemployment among teenagers, and especially black teenagers, is both a scandal and a serious source of social unrest." And then he went on to say, "It is largely a result of minimum wage laws."

I believe the minimum wage and this increase is one of the most anti-minority, anti-poor laws that we could bring into this Congress. It violates fundamental free market economics, and it will cost jobs.

The Heritage Foundation recently reported that for every 10 percent increase in the minimum wage there is a loss of 2 percent of entry level minimum wage jobs. This means, for what we consider today, we literally could see evaporate overnight 8 percent of the entry level jobs in this country.

I recently received an e-mail from a small sub sandwich restaurant owner in Anderson, Indiana, who told me of his frustration about what Congress would consider today, Mr. Speaker; and he begged me to ask for balance and justice for the wage payer as well as the wage earner. He said he had 200 applications on file, but he knew that if Congress passed this irresponsible 41 percent increase in the minimum wage, not only would he not be able to extend opportunity to some, he would have to cancel jobs for others.

Let us serve the wage earner and the wage payer. Let us reject this irresponsible increase in the minimum wage.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HARE), a member of the committee.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, the Fair Minimum Wage Act is an important step toward strengthening America's middle class by providing hardworking Americans with the wages they have earned. I rise in strong support of this legislation.

As the son of a union machinist and a former employee of a clothing factory, I understand the struggles many Americans face in trying to meet basic needs at minimum wages. Increasing the minimum wage from \$5.15 per hour to \$7.25 per hour provides a necessary raise to 13 million of America's lowest paid workers.

For too long we have ignored the plight of American working families.

Providing a more reasonable wage is not only a commonsense issue but a moral one as well, and I am proud that one of my first few votes in the Congress of the United States will be to extend economic fairness and justice to deserving workers.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, might I inquire again the time remaining.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentleman from California has 24½ minutes, and the gentleman from northern California has 44 minutes.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, we will reserve and let them take some time to kind of even that out.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1¼ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO).

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, a minimum wage increase is crucial for all Americans, more so for women and minorities.

Es de maxima importancia que este Congreso eleve el salario minimo, especialmente para las mujeres y menoresias.

Ten years of neglect, plus inflation, have left workers living below poverty.

Diez anos de olvido, mas la inflacion, han dejado a nuestros trabajadores en pobreza.

1.4 million working women will be main beneficiaries for an increase from \$5.15 to eventually \$7.25 per hour in 2 years, of which 33 percent are African American and Hispanic female workers.

Mas de uno punto cuarto millon de mujeres trabajan -seran las beneficiarias el cual son Hispanas y AfroAmericanas del salario de 5.15 a 7.25 pro hora.

It helps economic social conditions, reduces pay gaps. It helps the economy. More money spent will create more career opportunities through affordability of education.

Ayuda a la economia nacional ya que se gastara mas dinero.

Mujeres encabezadas de su familia podran tener mas dinero para mantener su familia.

Women breadwinners can increase economic and financial independence.

Enough talk. Take action. Have a conscience. Help America. Vote for the minimum wage increase.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair requests that the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. NAPOLITANO) provide a translation, of her remarks.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1½ minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH), a member of the committee.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of the Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2007.

Over the past 9 years, as the price of food has increased and the cost of housing swelled beyond the reach of many workers, the purchasing power of the minimum wage has fallen to its lowest level in 51 years.

Since 1997, the Federal minimum wage has been stalled at \$5.15 an hour

without an increase or adjustment. This stagnation of the minimum wage has left families with no guarantee that a full-time job will enable their most basic needs to be met.

At the current minimum wage, a worker spending 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year on the job, earns less than \$11,000 a year, leaving them more than \$5,000 below the poverty line for a family of three. That is shameful.

The passage of the bill today will directly help those families.

It is estimated that 5.6 million workers will receive an increase in their hourly wage if the minimum wage were raised to just \$7.25 an hour. An additional 7.4 million workers earning up to a dollar above the new minimum wage would also benefit. In total, 13 million workers will be aided by this necessary legislation.

The passage of this bill is a first step towards the greater goal of a living wage for every American worker because, even as it goes to \$7.25 an hour, there are many families who are still going to find themselves within the circumference of poverty. There are people who are looking forward to the action of this Congress.

But let it be said that the long-term objective, to ensure that workers are able to afford adequate housing and support their families, cannot be forgotten by this Congress.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1¼ minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. CASTOR).

Ms. CASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to throw a lifeline to the hardworking men and women in America by voting to increase the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25. It is no secret that health care costs are rising, along with property insurance, and it takes a lot to pay the rent these days. So, in a country where the average CEO earns more before lunchtime than the average minimum wage worker earns all year, this Congress must take action.

The increase in the minimum wage will help women, in particular, who comprise nearly two-thirds of all minimum wage workers. Many serve in the lowest-paying jobs back in our home towns, backbone jobs like child care, food service and cashiers. Many are women of color struggling to make ends meet for \$5.15 an hour.

In my district, according to the United Way of Tampa Bay, over 40 percent of the residents live in poverty. Well, we are going to lift them up. We are going to lift up millions of children by raising the minimum wage. American workers are long overdue for a raise because past Congresses have not increased the minimum wage in 10 years. But we are headed in a new direction now to improve the economic security for hardworking Americans. Step number one, raising the minimum wage.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1¼ minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ).